

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8008

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Environment, Water & Energy, February 06, 2009

Brief Description: Requesting full federal funding for the cleanup of the Hanford Reservation.

Sponsors: Senators Regala, Delvin, Rockefeller and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Water & Energy: 2/06/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rockefeller, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Fraser, Hatfield, Holmquist, Marr, Morton, Ranker and Sheldon.

Staff: Jan Odano (786-7486)

Background: The Hanford Reservation was the site of the Manhattan Project during World War II. It was here that the nation developed nuclear materials for national defense programs. During its 40 years in operation, Hanford produced nearly two-thirds of all the plutonium for government purposes in the United States. The processes to produce plutonium generated several waste streams, including solid waste that was disposed of in burial grounds, low level liquid waste that was disposed of in the soil, and reactor cooling water, another form of low level waste. It is this waste that makes the Hanford Reservation one of the most complex and difficult sites for cleanup.

In 1989 the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington State Department of Ecology signed a landmark agreement, the Tri-Party Agreement. The Tri-Party Agreement sets forth milestones for cleaning up the Hanford over a 30-year period. The federal budget for fiscal year 2009 did not provide sufficient funding to meet the milestones in the Tri-Party Agreement.

Summary of Bill: The President, Congress, and the Secretary of the United States Department of Energy are requested to fully fund the needs of a sustaining environmental cleanup at the Hanford Reservation. Full funding is requested to meet the requirements of the federal and state laws, the Tri-Party Agreement, and to provide environmental protection for the Columbia River and the citizens of the state of Washington.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Given the current level of federal funding, it will take decades to clean up Hanford. This is an important message to send to the current administration.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Regala, prime sponsor; Bob Cooper, Heart of America.